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ABSTRACT

Presenting lesson plans for secondary teachers of language arts, this booklet is intended to help students develop healthy attitudes toward their own aging, realize the lifelong importance of decisions they make as adults, and understand the interdependence of all age groups. The activities suggested in the booklet are designed to address existing curricular objectives and require minimal preparation time. They can be used by social studies, and health and home economics teachers, as well as by language arts teachers. Lessons in the booklet are: (1) Avoid Ageism in Your Writing; (2) What Do You Call Older People?; (3) Songs about Age; (4) Writing Fiction: Using Older Characters; (5) Pictures of the Past: I Remember When...; (6) Pictures Worth a Thousand Words; (7) Age-Old Objects; (8) Famous People; (9) Intergenerational Life Writing; (10) What I Was Your Age...; (11) Novels Depicting Older Characters; (12) Rediscover Children's Literature; and (13) But Grandmother, Please! Three annotated bibliographies presenting selected readings about older adults (37 short stories, 37 novels, 29 dramas) and an epilogue (Why Teach about Aging?) are attached. (RS)

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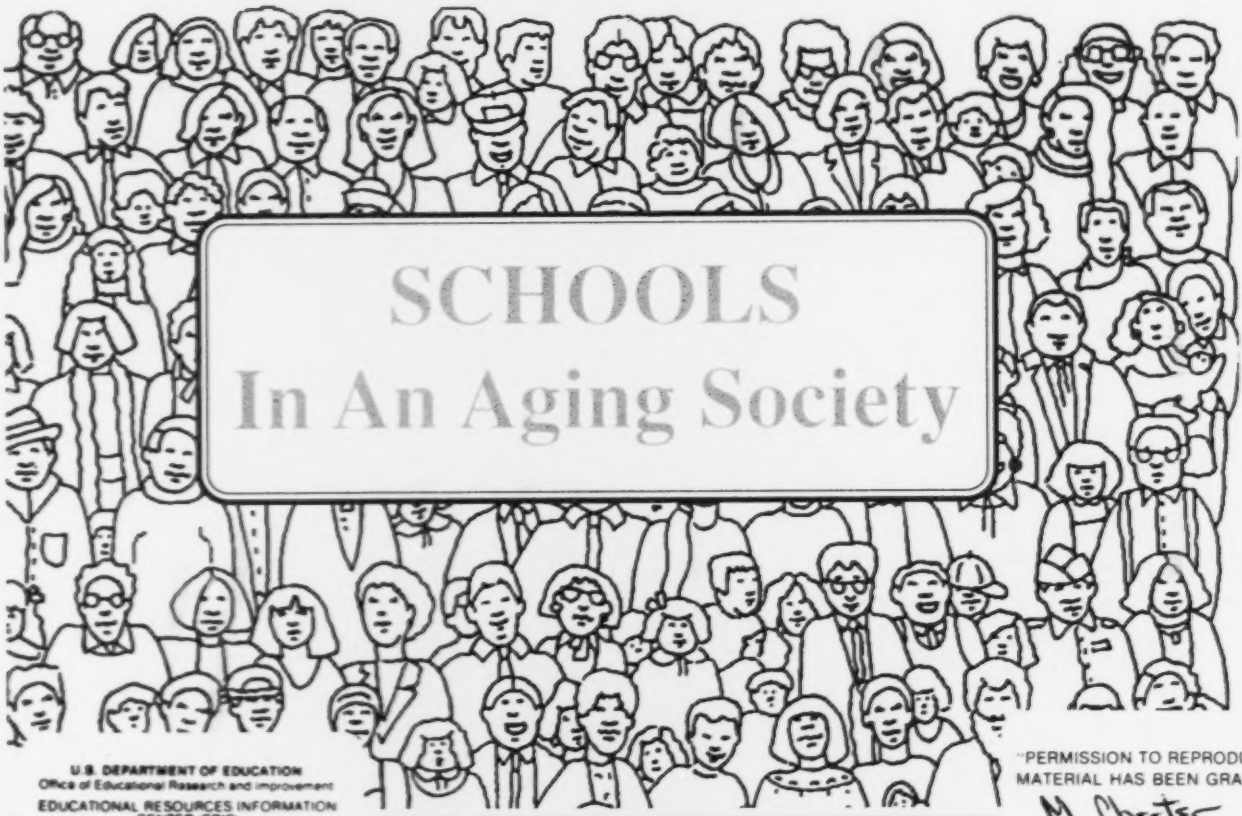
LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS



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Schools In An Aging Society:

LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Printed Courtesy of ITT Hartford Insurance Group

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PREFACE

Young people need to be aware of the social, political and economic consequences of an aging society. Schools can prepare students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to participate in this changing world. The intent of the series *Schools in an Aging Society* is to promote education for, with and about older adults. It consists of six interrelated guides.

Strengthening the School-Community Connection shows how schools can be more responsive to the larger community. It is especially beneficial in areas where an increasing proportion of residents are older and have no school-age children. The guide is designed for school administrators, volunteer coordinators, staff developers, and members of local boards of education who seek creative uses of community resources and want to increase intergenerational cooperation. It describes in detail AGES (Advancing Generations' Education through the Schools), a planning model that promotes awareness of older adults through staff development, intergenerational exchange projects, curricular activities, curriculums on aging, and classroom and extracurricular activities. Eight steps are followed in designing an AGES program at either a systemwide or individual school level. Issues such as recruitment, follow-up, and continuity of projects are addressed. The program benefits students, teachers and older residents with minimal resource commitments from any one group.

As the fastest-growing segment of society, older adults can be valuable resources for schools. *Elders as Resources* develops a rationale for intergenerational programs that address the educational and social needs of younger and older persons. Older adults can offer their expertise and experiences to enrich educational programs, as well as satisfy their own needs for meaningful social roles. Younger persons benefit from older persons who serve as positive role models and mentors. *Elders as Resources* suggests seven intergenerational models for classroom teachers. Practical suggestions are given for planning intergenerational programs, facilitating intergenerational discussions and conducting oral history interviews.

The challenges for our society require educators to confront stereotypic images of older adults and to present an accurate and balanced view of aging. Three *Classroom Activities* guides in this series consist of lesson plans for secondary teachers of health and home economics, language arts, and social studies. The suggested activities are designed to address existing curricular objectives and require minimal preparation time. Although learning activities are separated by discipline, teachers are encouraged to use information in other content areas. Since aging is an interdisciplinary subject, many activities would be appropriate in several subjects as well as for promoting interdisciplinary instruction. The activities are intended to help students develop healthy attitudes toward their own aging, realize the lifelong importance of decisions they make as young adults, and understand the interdependence of all age groups.

Finally, a *Guide for Pupil Personnel Specialists* provides age-related information on the changing family and workplace. It is appropriate for school counselors, psychologists and social workers. Changes in family structure, such as fewer children and more older persons, mean that students have different family experiences and needs than young people of past generations. An increasing number of young people are

(continued)

in homes where primary care is provided to their grandparents. Also, a growing number of children are under the primary care of their grandparents. Additionally, career opportunities and the workplace are affected by the aging society. School counselors are in a unique position to help young people by working with students individually, in the classroom, with families, and through school-community programs.

Schools and community organizations can act as catalysts for promoting a supportive social and economic environment for successful aging. The benefits extend to future generations of older people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The six-part *Schools in an Aging Society* series was developed as part of the Connecticut Aging Awareness Project, a joint effort of the Connecticut State Department of Education and State Department on Aging. The project was funded by the United States Administration on Aging and ITT Hartford Insurance Group.

Laura Donorfio, project assistant, contributed in countless ways to the development of these materials, including researching topics, typing, reviewing, editing and organizing material.

David Shuldiner, humanities program coordinator for the Connecticut State Department on Aging, was the lead author of the guide, *Elders as Resources*. He worked closely with educators and social service agencies to provide intergenerational program recommendations.

Mark A. Edinberg, originator of AGES (Advancing Generations' Education through Schools), was the lead author of *Strengthening the School-Community Connection*. He worked closely with schools that have implemented the AGES planning model.

The ideas found in the discipline guides of *Schools in an Aging Society* come from many individuals whose contributions may not be acknowledged here, but whose efforts are greatly appreciated. Numerous ideas were generated from outstanding educators participating in Connecticut's Institute for Teaching and Learning over the past four years. The following educators served in advisory capacities and provided background information, classroom suggestions and organizational ideas for the *Classroom Activities* guides.

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Connecticut State Department of Education

LESSON 1

Avoid Ageism In Your Writing

Introduction

Just as people are increasingly conscious of racist and sexist expressions, we need to be aware of words that might be viewed as ageist. A writer or speaker may have good intentions, but unknowingly present information to older or younger persons in a way which is demeaning. This activity is appropriate for journalism classes and can be included in units on word choices.

Objectives

Students will:

- examine several examples of ageist language; and
- edit writing to reflect nonageist content.

Key Term

ageism

Materials

Handout: "Avoid Ageism In Your Writing" (see pages 2 and 3)

Procedures

1. Introduce the concept of ageism and relate it to experiences familiar to young people. For example, the teacher might ask students how they react to written or verbal expressions that are condescending to teenagers.

2. Distribute the handout, "Avoid Ageism In Your Writing." Read and discuss the first section with the entire class.

3. Have students work individually or in small groups to develop suggested revisions 3 and 4. Revisions then can be discussed.

Extension Activities

- Ask students to bring to class local newspaper articles about older people. Review the articles to detect any possible ageist connotations.

- Before this activity, ask students to write a short composition about older people. Then have students analyze what they wrote in terms of ageist language.

Avoid Ageism In Your Writing

(For Use With Lesson 1 On Page 1)

Careful and sensitive use of vocabulary is important in assuring that older adults are fairly and accurately presented in printed materials. Passages that unnecessarily exclude older people or unfairly treat the experience of aging often can be presented in a more balanced way. Avoid words and phrases which demean, patronize or stereotype older persons, such as the following:

- patronizing adjectives such as *cute, sweet, dear* and *little;*
- negative physical descriptors such as *crippled, deaf, dentured, emaciated, feeble, fragile, frail, frowning, gray, wrinkled, withered, dirty* and *doddering;*
- negative personality descriptors such as *cheerless, dull, eccentric, foolish, obstinate* and *senile;*
- demeaning labels and expressions such as *old maid, old codger, old biddy, fuddy duddy, lecher, old fool, Geritol generation, golden agers, has-been, over the hill, out-of-date* and *fading fast*; and
- the stereotypes of older women such as *passive, dependent, frivolous, shrewish* and *nagging.*

Read the following passages and underline ageist expressions.

> Ageist Passage 1: This is a progressive company. The management training program is open to recent college graduates. It offers bright young men and women an opportunity to step right into important positions without a long waiting period. This situation is mutually desirable for the company and future executives. For the company, it provides a reliable source of new blood. For aggressive young people, it puts them right into the swing of things when they are still vital and alive. No longer is it unheard-of for a company like this one to have a president and executive staff all under the age of 40.
>
> Ageist Passage 2: The many islands, large and small, off the southeast coast of the United States have become a popular year-round playground for the young and the "young at heart." These islands have much to offer those who are looking for adventure with a touch of class: palm trees, sandy beaches, color, style, lively night life and young multilingual people.

(continued)

Adapted from National Retired Teachers Association and American Association of Retired Persons. *Truth About Aging: Guidelines for Publishers,* 1979. Reprinted with permission.

Now underline the changes made in the following revisions.

Suggested Revision 1: This is a progressive company. The management training program is open to bright, motivated applicants. It offers those with management potential the opportunity to move into important positions. This situation is mutually desirable for both the company and future executives. For the company, it provides a reliable source of managers who are fluent in company policy. For new trainees, it provides an opportunity to receive training specifically geared to the company's needs.

Suggested Revision 2: The many islands, large and small, off the southeast coast of the United States have become most popular both for winter and summer vacations. These islands have much to offer any visitor: palm trees, sandy beaches, color, style, nightly entertainment and multilingual people.

Now it's your turn. Imagine you are a local newspaper editor and the following article was submitted to you. Read the article and then revise it so the event is reported accurately, without ageist expressions.

Ageist Passage 3

Local senior citizens showed that they could still kick up their heels at a dance this Friday. A few of the young-at-heart boogied to familiar old tunes, while most of the old folks looked on. The band was made up of old-timers themselves. They played songs from the 1930s and 40s, unfamiliar to most anyone under 50. The elderly who attended the dance will receive senior discounts on the upcoming trip to the Tri-County Fair, scheduled for next Friday.

Suggested Revision 3 (prepare on notebook paper)

Imagine you are the town manager and the senior center director gives you the following announcement of upcoming activities. If you were to organize a similar event, what changes would you make so there could be a greater variety of activities and age representation?

Ageist Passage 4

Next month's senior activity will be a craft exhibit at the senior center. All senior citizens in the town are invited to bring their handiwork. Special booths will be set up for needlepoint, quilts and crocheted items. The young women from the Junior League will judge items. A special prize will be awarded to a person over 70 who displays the most creative craft.

Suggested Revision 4 (prepare on notebook paper)

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LESSON 2

What Do You Call Older People?

Introduction

Terms we use to refer to older people often are used without much thought to the subtle but powerful differences in meanings. Like other word choices, there are no right or wrong answers, but the terms may be better or worse depending on the social context, audience and purpose.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand the importance of word connotations; and
- explain the connotations of words used to refer to older people.

Key Terms

connotation, denotation, elder, elderly, golden ager, older adult, senior citizen

Materials

Handout: "What Do You Call Older People?" (see page 7)

Procedures

1. Explain the difference between *denotation* (explicit or direct meaning) and *connotation* (suggested meaning). Give an example, such as *politician* and *statesman,* or *police officer* and *cop,* which carry similar denotations but different connotations.

2. Introduce the handout, which lists words used to refer to older people. Follow the directions on the handout.

3. Discuss what each term in the handout means to students and whether or not these meanings are favorable. Students will differ among themselves about the connotations of terms which refer to older people. They even may speak with some emotion about why they like or do not like a term. Reinforce the fact that persons may have differences of opinion. In such cases, ask those with opposing viewpoints if they are able to understand the reasoning of others.

4. While accepting students' expressions about the terms, the following points should be made.

    a. Although the word *elderly* is commonly used, it often is associated with social service or health programs. It generally connotes a nameless, faceless population of poor, frail older people over 75. It can be used to elicit feelings of sympathy. *Elderly,* as a descriptive adjective such as *the elderly woman,* conveys different messages from *elderly* as a noun, such as *the elderly.* The latter tends to place all older persons in a stereotyped group which some older adults would find offensive.

b. *Elder* suggests respect and wisdom, as in *respect your elders.* It is a term which is not widely used. It is more often associated with males than females. For some religious groups, the term carries a different connotation, referring to positions in churches.

c. *Senior citizen* generally suggests a younger-aged population. People typically think of senior discounts and groups of persons engaged in some activity. While some older people do not mind the term, others object to being called *senior citizens.*

d. *Senior* is a more relative term than *senior citizen.* We use it to refer to persons who have more years of experience, but who are not necessarily older in years, such as *seniors in high school* or *senior bank officers.* For some, it is preferred over *senior citizens,* since it does not carry the group or discount connotation.

e. *Old man* or *old woman* generally are viewed as derogatory terms. The word *old* is considered harsh, direct and negative. The terms might be used for emphasis in some literature. Most people think the term is unfavorable and one which should be avoided in written and verbal communication.

f. *Golden ager* usually brings mixed reviews. For some, the term connotes a carefree, happy, older person. For others, the term is a euphemism for a more serious time of life. It may suggest that older people are not to be taken seriously. The television program *Golden Girls* illustrates both points of view.

g. Of all the terms, *older adult* is the most neutral and the safest. *Older* is a relative expression, since everyone is *older* than someone else. The word *adult* demands respect, and connotes independence and responsibility. Younger people want to be treated as *adults* – so do older people. For these reasons, *older adult* is the better choice for expository writing and speaking.

Extension Activities

- To help students understand and apply the differences in word connotations for *older people*, ask them to write statements using different terms for *older people*.

- Have students consider which terms for *older adults* they think the following persons would most likely use: movie star, politician, medical doctor, news reporter, political cartoonist, nursing home employee. For example, a politician seeking public office might say, "The good citizens of this state cannot neglect the needs of its *elderly*." Then have students write sentences using terms for older adults which the following persons might use: (1) a retail advertiser promoting a new line of clothing, (2) a restaurant manager offering discounts for young and old people, (3) a bank president whose bank offers financial advice for older people, (4) a real estate agent promoting a retirement condominium, and (5) an Asian college professor discussing the role of age groups in Chinese culture. Discuss which sentences are the most and least condescending.

- Relate the exercise to other applications of word choice, such as *girl, gal, woman, black, Afro-American, Negro, Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, homosexual, gay, children, kids,* and *young people.*

- Emphasize the importance of addressing people by name, whenever possible. Discuss the appropriateness or inappropriateness of calling older people by their first names. In some cultures and geographic areas, addressing an older person by anything other than Mr., Mrs. or Miss is taboo. In others, young people may address older people whom they know well by their first names without leaving the impression of arrogance or disrespect. However, the safer personal address is the formal one.

What Do You Call Older People?

(For Use With Lesson 2 On Page 4)

Directions: Column 1 lists words used to refer to older people. In column 2, write brief notes on what comes to your mind with each word. For example, how many persons do you see? About how old are they? What are they doing? In column 3, indicate with a check mark the extent to which you think each term is favorable or unfavorable.

Term	Description of term	Very Favorable	Favorable	Luke-warm	Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Elderly						
Elder						
Senior Citizen						
Senior						
Old Man/ Old Woman						
Golden Ager						
Older Adult						

LESSON 3
Songs About Age

Introduction

Music is a medium that appeals to all ages. Many musical groups popular in the 1960s, 70s and 80s are familiar to adolescents of the 90s. This activity uses music as a means to explore attitudes about old age.

Objectives

Students will:

- identify common attitudes about aging that are found in popular songs;
- indicate ways in which negative attitudes influence relationships with older people;
- identify common fears about aging; and
- consider the extent to which popular songs accurately portray the majority of older people.

Materials

cassette tapes, records or compact discs and music-playing equipment

Procedures

1. Ask students to bring to class recordings of music about older people. Teachers can share their albums from the "old days." Below is a selected list of songs about aging.
    - Joan Baez (1974). "Forever Young," *The Best of Joan Baez.*
    - The Beatles. (1967). "When I'm 64," *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.*
    - Elton John. (1971). "Sixty Years On," *11-17-70.*
    - Mike and the Mechanics (1988). "Living Years," *Living Years.*
    - Willie Nelson and Roger Miller (1982). "Old Friends," *Old Friends.*
    - Joni Mitchell (1990). "Nothing Can Be Done," *Night Ride Home.*
    - The Rolling Stones (circa 1970). "Mother's Little Helper," *Through the Past, Darkly.*
    - Linda Ronstadt (1978). "When I Grow Too Old to Dream," *Living in the USA.*
    - Saffire (1990). "Middle-Aged Blues Boogie," *Uppity Blues Women.*
    - Simon and Garfunkle (1968). "Old Friends," *Bookends.*
    - Frank Sinatra (1983). "Young at Heart," *Gift of Music.*
    - Frank Sinatra (1968). "It Was a Very Good Year," *Frank Sinatra Greatest Hits, Vol. 1.*
    - James Taylor (1988). "Never Die Young," *Never Die Young.*
    - James Taylor. (1977). "Secret o' Life," *JT.*

2. Discuss the lyrics, melody and overall message of the songs. What ideas about aging are expressed? What fears or joys are expressed in the music about old age? Does the music reflect the thoughts and feelings of any older people you know? How can lyricists write about old age when they have not personally experienced it?

Extension Activities

- Compose a class song or group song on aging.
- Invite older adults from a local community choral group to listen to the music and participate in an intergenerational discussion group.
- Ask each student to draw a picture representing a song about aging.

LESSON 4

Writing Fiction: Using Older Characters

Introduction

Fictional readings and writing assignments are more likely to be about young characters than older ones. Older people bring new and different perspectives to stories. Teachers should encourage young writers to develop creative older adult characters and to avoid simple stereotypical characters.

Objectives

Students will:

- consider the role age plays in story lines; and
- develop creative older adult characters in short stories.

Procedures

1. Explain to students that the main objective of this writing exercise is to develop a creative, nonstereotypical older fictional character. Introduce the assignment with a short discussion of the following points: Good writers do not rely on stereotypical characters. Two common stereotypes of older people are the sweet, old grandparent type and the frail, miserly, crotchety type. Students may recall older characters in literature that reflect different portrayals of older people, e.g., grandfather in *Heidi*, *Ole King Cole*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol.*
2. Assign the writing exercise. First, have students develop an older fictitious character for a short story which might be titled, "A Day in the Life of _____ (older person's name)." Students develop the personal and physical characteristics of the older person. The teacher might give students an example, such as the character Angela Lansbury plays in the television show *Murder, She Wrote*. After thinking about their lead characters, students outline a story plot around particular events and circumstances facing their older characters, then write their short stories. The stories may include characters of other ages, but an older person should be the lead character. Encourage students to think creatively by developing older characters who confront their situations in nonstereotypical ways.
3. In cooperative learning groups, students may compare stories in terms of attitudes toward aging and the aged, lifestyles and intergenerational relations of older people, and perceived options available to older people. Discuss the extent to which student writings reflect traditional stereotypes of older people. Consider the kinds and severity of problem situations in which students placed their older characters. Students may suggest to their group members plot and character development alternatives that might be less stereotypical.

Extension Activity

- Hold a class discussion on how the age of characters affects a story. Give examples of stories students have read recently. What would happen to the story if an older family member, friend or enemy were introduced? What would happen if the lead character were older? For example, what if the *Hardy Boys* or *Nancy Drew* were older or had an older accomplice working cases with them? Students might read a story, and then write another version of the same story by introducing an older character or making the lead character older.

LESSON 5

Pictures Of The Past: I Remember When . . .

Introduction

While reminiscence is commonly associated with aging, people of all ages reminisce. Young people may reflect on elementary school days, a memorable family trip, a difficult period or a former best friend. Some adolescents may not appreciate when older people begin stories with "When I was your age . . ." or "I remember when . . . ." It is difficult to take the perspective of another person whose life experiences differ greatly from one's own. This activity encourages students to see the value of reminiscence in their own lives and to imagine the reminiscence of another person. This activity can be used in conjunction with a novel written at the turn of the 20th century, as part of a history unit or after students have conducted oral histories.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand the value of reminiscence for people of all ages; and
- develop a story from the perspective of an older person.

Key Terms

reminiscence, perspective

Materials

Handout: "Pictures From The Past: I Remember When . . ." (see page 11)

Procedures

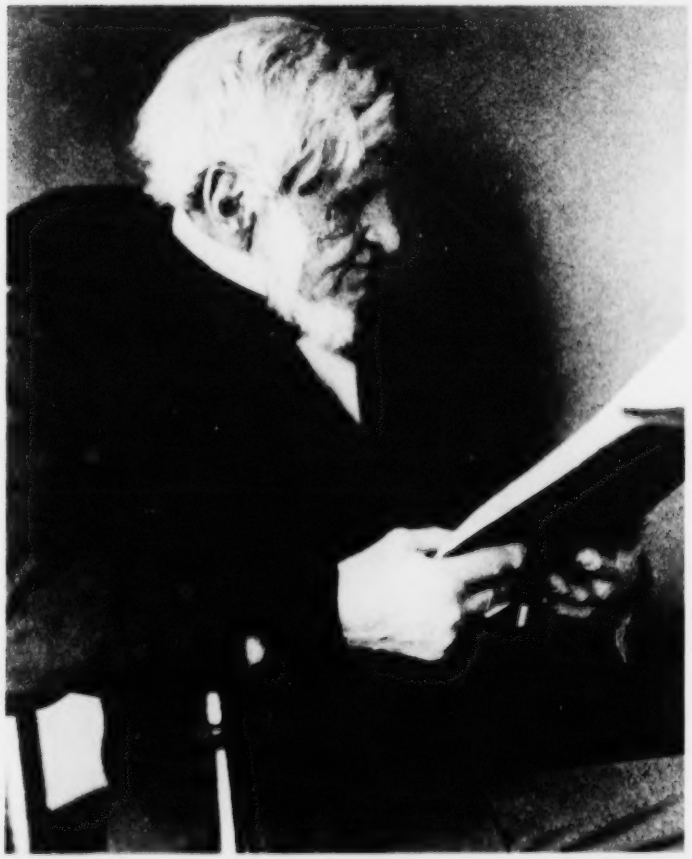
1. Ask students to think of a memorable time in their lives – an exciting, frightening, important or fun time. Who was with you? How long ago was it? What happened? Would it be the same for you if it happened today? Students can write a description of the event or describe the event verbally.
2. Discuss why reminiscing – recalling experiences and feelings from the past – is valuable. Some points students may identify are: reminiscing helps put the present in perspective; gives a sense of growth and accomplishment; can help in making better decisions for the future; creates meaning and continuity to one's life; and can be entertaining.
3. Introduce the handout (page 11) showing portrait photographs taken around 1900. Ask students to write about one of the two persons. Some may liken the older person to a great-grandparent or someone they know. As background information, students may get ideas from an older adult about the life and times of the person in the photograph and research the time period.
4. Discuss student papers, bringing out common themes.

Extension Activities

- Have students write a reminiscence paper on their own lives.
- Have students research world events which occurred during the lives of the persons pictured. Discuss how world events might influence the attitudes and beliefs of those pictured.
- Ask students to interview and write about the reminiscences of an older person they know.

Pictures Of The Past: I Remember When . . .

Put yourself in the picture. Imagine yourself entering the room of one of the persons pictured below. What might the person be reading and thinking? What hopes, fears, dreams and worries might be on that person's mind? You sit down beside the older person, who starts a conversation beginning with the line, "I remember when . . . ." Write about your conversation.



(For Use With Lesson 5 On Page 10)

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LESSON 6
Pictures Worth A Thousand Words

Introduction

Older people are used less often than younger people as subjects for classroom writing exercises. This activity uses 19th century photographs of older people. It gives teachers opportunities to discuss stereotypes of older people that may arise in student compositions.

Objective

Students will:

- practice descriptive writing, using older adults in historical settings as subjects.

Materials

Handout: "Pictures Worth A Thousand Words" (see page 13)

Procedures

1. Give examples of good descriptive writing that figuratively paint pictures.

2. Introduce the handout (page 13) and use the following directions.

   "You have heard the expression, 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' See for yourself. Choose the picture below which interests you most. Using as many descriptive words as possible, describe the persons and setting in the picture. Include descriptions of facial expression, dress, background setting, feelings or mood, and other characteristics. See how many words you can use in well-constructed sentences to describe the photograph."

3. Compare student descriptions. Without being critical, draw attention to obvious negative stereotypes of older people.

Extension Activities

- Incorporate historical references to the time period in which the pictures were taken. This activity may be used in an interdisciplinary unit with social studies.
- Students can improve their perceptions of historical time and generations by discussing the pictures with older friends, neighbors or family members. The pictures probably predate most older persons whom students know, but will generate discussions about the older person's own family life and younger years. Discussion of former recreation and transportation generally interests young people. Students can write a summary about their discussion.
- Invite students to write about family pictures that reflect earlier time periods. Pictures since the 1950s will be more common. Teachers can increase student attention by bringing in personal photographs and reading aloud their own short, descriptive picture essay.

Pictures Worth A Thousand Words

(For Use With Lesson 6 On Page 12)

Older couple in front of farmhouse with horse-drawn equipment, c. 1890s

Older couple sitting and drinking outside at a table in their yard, c. 1890s

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LESSON 7
Age-Old Objects

Introduction

This exercise uses visual objects to stimulate ideas for creative writing. Old objects become metaphors for aging. They reflect our attitudes and beliefs about aging.

Objectives

Students will:

- practice verbal skills, expressing meanings attached to objects;
- practice writing skills, using objects related to old age; and
- examine personal attitudes about old age.

Materials

objects associated with old age

Procedures

1. Ask students to bring to class objects or pictures of objects that remind them of old age. Some examples might be an afghan, brooch, table doily, teapot, hair comb, clock, house plant, bow tie, 78 rpm records. Students and teachers may not always agree on the association of all objects with old age. This is an opportunity to explore meanings of objects, some of which may be personal, while others may reflect cohort differences.

2. Display objects in front of the classroom. Ask students to explain why their object reminds them of old age.

3 Ask students to choose one or more objects about which they can write a poem or essay. (They may choose objects other than the one they brought to class.) The writing might be from the perspective of the object, from the owner of the object, or from the young person who sees or uses the object.

4. After making changes on drafts, students make final copies with illustrations.

Extension Activities

- Feature writing samples on a bulletin board or in a composite book to be given to a local senior organization.

- Make the writing process intergenerational by inviting older adults from the community to join the class in the visual and writing exercise.

LESSON 8
Famous People

Introduction

Students often read about famous people without considering the relevance of life stages. Attitudes, events and decisions early in life shape options and achievements later in life. This activity encourages students to apply information about famous adults to their own lives. It will take several class periods to complete.

Objectives

Students will:

- list achievements of older persons;
- identify events and decisions that shape options and achievements later in life;
- discuss values and personal traits that help in overcoming obstacles; and
- write an essay applying information gained about famous persons.

Materials

Handouts: "Famous People," "Life Stages" and "Life Factors" (see pages 17-19).

Procedures

1. Distribute the "Famous People" handout. Ask students what they already know about persons on the list.

2. Each student can choose a different person from the list. Students will use the library card catalog and *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* as sources of information on their research subjects. Several sources should be used, including biographies, magazine articles and an encyclopedia.

3. Distribute the "Life Stages" and "Life Factors" handouts, on which students will take notes.

4. After they have researched their subjects and taken notes on the handouts, organize students into small discussion groups of four or five in which they share the results of their work. An appointed recorder for each group should complete blank "Life Stages" and "Life Factors" handouts based on the reports from the group. Each group should seek a consensus on the question, "Is there one single factor that helped all of your famous people?"

5. After all groups reach consensus, each group member should briefly highlight the factors which influenced the accomplishments of his or her person, followed by the group spokespersons, who report on commonalities observed among the famous persons researched.

6. Have students write a summary of the factors that made their subjects famous.

Adapted with permission from Pratt, Fran.
"Research: Famous Person's Achievements,"
Teaching and Learning about Aging.
Framingham, MA: Framingham State College, 1982.

Extension Activities

- Have students prepare a silhouette symbol, collage or drawing that represents the field of achievement of the person researched. These can be used for group presentations or bulletin board displays.

- Individuals can be successful in their own lives whether or not history records them among the few who became famous. Ask students to write an essay on their personal goals, applying the insights they learned from their class research on famous people. What kind of person do you (students) want to become? How have the values and goals of the person you researched changed from when he or she was younger? As you grow older and continue to mature, how do you think your own goals might change?

Famous People

(For Use With Lesson 8 On Page 15)

How many of the names below do you recognize? What do you know about these people? Each person is famous for his or her accomplishments in life. Choose one person below, perhaps someone you do not recognize, and find out what helped make her or him become creative, influential, productive or successful.

Artists/Performers

Marian Anderson
Ludwig van Beethoven
George Burns
Mary Cassatt
Marc Chagall
Charles Chaplin
Bette Davis
Agnes de Mille
Duke Ellington
Martha Graham
Helen Hayes
Katharine Hepburn
Bob Hope
Franz Liszt
Michelangelo
Claude Monet
Grandma (Anna Maria) Moses
Pablo Picasso
Artur Rubinstein
John Wayne
Frank Lloyd Wright

Writers/Scientists

Jane Austen
George Washington Carver
Thomas A. Edison
Sigmund Freud
Robert Frost
Victor Hugo
Henrik Ibsen
Helen Keller
Margaret Mead
Jean Piaget
Bertrand Russell
Albert Schweitzer
George Bernard Shaw
Booker T. Washington

Business People/Politicians

Coco Chanel
Winston Churchill
Charles de Gaulle
Justice William O. Douglas
Frederick Douglass
Benjamin Franklin
Mahatma Gandhi
Thomas Jefferson
Jomo Kenyatta
Mao Tse-tung
Golda Meir
Ronald Reagan
Helena Rubenstein
Margaret Chase Smith
Harry S. Truman

Life Stages

Name _____ **Person studied** _____

Sources (author and title) _____

_____

_____

Directions: List important dates, events, people, influences, obstacles, decisions and accomplishments in your person's life.

Childhood (Birth - 13)	Adolescence (13 - 20)	Young Adulthood (20 - 40)	Middle Age (40 - 65)	Later Years (Over 65)

(For Use With Lesson 8 On Page 15)

Life Factors

Name _____ **Person studied** _____

Directions: List factors that helped the person in his or her accomplishments.

Character Traits/Qualities	Values	Goals	Obstacles to Overcome	Accomplishments

(For Use With Lesson 8 On Page 15)

LESSON 9
Intergenerational Life Writing

Introduction

Life writing is an opportunity for younger and older people to share life views and experiences through intergenerational writing exercises. This activity is one of several intergenerational approaches to education explained in the *Elders as Resources* guide. Since the lesson is particularly successful in language arts activities, it is detailed in this guide as well.

Objective

Students will:

- practice interpersonal and writing skills in an intergenerational setting.

Procedures

1. The teacher discusses the program with a person in charge of activities for a local nursing home, adult day care, senior center or elder housing complex. Arrangements are made for volunteer older adults to work with interested students in a writing project for a designated time, e.g., one hour a week for three consecutive weeks. The first time the program is tried it should be with only a few students and older adults. It should be designed so that it is not a large time commitment for the teacher, elder agency personnel, older volunteers or students.

2. Older adults and students work in pairs on the writing project. The teacher should focus on a life event or theme, such as family relations, childhood or personal values. Both older adults and young students compose a short paper describing something about their own lives. In some circumstances, young people can transcribe oral tapes of older adults who might have physical difficulty with writing. Both the younger and older persons compare their perspectives on the same topic and offer helpful comments or suggestions.

3. Conclude the project with each person presenting to the other the final copy of his or her paper.

Extension Activities

- Have students interview older adults and transcribe notes on word processors. They then can write journal-type articles based on the interviews. Students present essays to the older adults who were interviewed during a special day of celebration. (This activity was developed by Patricia Jacqueline, a language arts teacher at Windsor High School.)
- Offer alternative activities for students and older persons who do not wish to participate in writing projects, but would enjoy participating in discussion groups or games such as bingo.
- Students can be encouraged to continue contact with their older adult partners beyond the project.
- This kind of intergenerational program may be of interest to the local newspaper. Press coverage may help create additional interest among other students and older persons.

LESSON 10
When I Was Your Age . . .

Introduction

This activity allows students to consider issues that may affect the course of their lives. A comparison with life events of older adults is made. This activity is appropriate for an interdisciplinary unit with language arts, social studies, health and home economics. It also can be used in units on human relations and problem solving.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand generational differences in life experiences;
- gain a greater appreciation for the communality of life histories;
- consider their future life courses in view of their past and present; and
- practice writing and verbal skills.

Materials

Handout: "When I Was Your Age . . ." (see page 22)

Procedures

1. Give students the handout containing the *Family Circus* cartoon (page 22). Ask students to imagine themselves as they might be 50 years from now. Ask students to write a reaction paper to the handout. Students may begin their papers with "When I was 16 . . ." or "When I was your age . . . ."

2. Use excerpts from the papers (without students' names) to discuss student concerns and the importance of making lifestyle choices that will enable a longer and healthier life.

Extension Activities

- Ask groups of students to prepare a skit or role play where they are explaining to their grandchildren what it was like growing up in the 20th century.

- Hold an intergenerational discussion group using the handout and cartoon. Invite older persons to write about what it was like for them growing up. Younger and older persons then read and comment on each others' essays.

- Have students interview older persons and write comparisons of growing up, both then and now.

"When I Was Your Age . . . "

(For Use With Lesson 10 on Page 21)

Has an older person ever told you what it was like for them growing up? How far they had to walk to school? How hard they had to work? How little they were paid? Certainly life was difficult 30, 50 and 70 years ago. In order to understand older adults – how they think and why they do certain things – we need to know about their past. For many, the hardships of growing up during the Depression of the 1930s and during the world wars strengthened them and equipped them for problems in later life. What will you tell your children and grandchildren? What stories will you pass on to younger generations?

The *Family Circus* cartoon below shows Billy thinking about world problems. His parents think he has a carefree life with no concerns. What is it like growing up and being a teenager today? Thirty or 50 years from now what will you tell the next generation about life in the late 1900s? How do you think your attitudes and behaviors will be affected by your childhood experiences? Like older people today, will the hardships you have endured make you a stronger person, or will the hardships defeat you?

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LESSON 11

Novels Depicting Older Characters

Introduction

In this activity, students read and discuss a significant novel depicting an older person who confronts a personal challenge or difficult circumstance. After analyzing literature involving older persons who are searching for meaning in life, students write a composition exploring one aspect of the novel – characterization, style, symbolism or theme.

Objectives

Students will:

- analyze characterization, style, symbolism or theme in a novel depicting an older person;
- participate in student cooperative critiquing;
- write a composition on one aspect of the novel; and
- give examples of challenges older people face and positive actions needed in order to meet these challenges.

Procedures

1. Have students read a major literary work depicting an older person. If enough copies are available, the class might read the same work. If not, student groups could be organized around those who are reading the same work, so that class groups of about five students would read, discuss and critique the same book. Examples of books depicting older characters include the following.

    - Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1868.
    - Amis, Kingsley. *Ending Up.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1973.
    - Beresford-Howe, Constance. *The Book of Eve.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1974.
    - Corbett, Elizabeth. *Our Mrs. Meigs.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1954.
    - Danska, Herbert. *Street Kids.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.
    - Greene, Graham. *Travels with My Aunt.* New York: Viking Press, 1970.
    - Greenfield, Josh, and Mazursky, Paul. *Harry and Tonto.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974.
    - Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea.* New York: Charles Scribner, 1952.

Adapted with permission from Pratt, Fran.
Language Arts Activities for Teaching about Aging.
Framingham, MA: Center for Understanding Aging,
Framingham State College, 1981.

- Higgins, Colin. *Harold and Maude*. New York: Avon Books, 1975.
- Hilton, James. *Goodbye Mr. Chips*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1934.
- Kazantzakis, Nikos. *Zorba the Greek*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952.
- Lawrence, Josephine. *The Web of Time*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953.
- Smith, Robert K. *Sadie Shapiro's Knitting Book*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.
- Thompson, Ernest. *On Golden Pond*. New York: Dodd, 1979.

2. After students have read their selected book, ask them to write a 10-minute free-writing response to the novel.

3. Organize students in groups to discuss their initial responses to the novel. What did they like? Not like? What were the books' strengths? Weaknesses? After initial free-writing responses are shared in small groups, ask students to discuss the thesis of each book. What was the central idea of each book?

4. For homework, ask each student to write a first draft of a two- or three-page literary analysis, concentrating on one aspect of the book, such as characterization, style, symbolism or theme.

5. Drafts are shared in class among student group members who make comments and suggestions. Students then incorporate suggested changes in their final copies, which are to be submitted to the teacher.

6. After the teacher has read final papers, hold a class discussion on how issues facing the older characters in the novels relate to issues facing younger and older people today. (The teacher may ask students to incorporate this into their literary critique.)

Extension Activities

- Some novels have been made into films, which are available at video stores. If time permits, show one such film in class. Discuss the character development and the film's interpretation or adaptation of the novel.
- Some communities have small groups of older adults who are interested in literature. Locate agencies serving older adults to see if they know of older persons who meet to read and discuss literature. Some adult education programs offer literature courses to adults. These same adults might enjoy participating in a daytime class with secondary students.

(continued)

- Adapt the following discussion questions to the reading assignment.

Problems faced

What problems were faced by individuals of different ages?
What caused these problems and why were they important?
In what ways do young and old people face similar problems?

Decisions

What important decisions were made by the characters?
What influenced individuals in their decisions?
In what ways did family members or peers exert strong influences in decisions?
What resulted from these decisions?
In what ways, if any, would the decisions affect them in later life?
What other choices did individuals have, and would they have changed the results?
Do you think the same decisions would have been made if the characters were younger? Older?
What decisions do you or other family members make which are similar to the those in the story?

Physical circumstances

What did the individual(s) look like?
How important were physical appearances to the story?
What were the historical and geographical settings?
Did the setting make a difference to the story?
How would the story have been different had it taken place in a different time or setting?

Personal qualities

What personal attributes, such as kindness or impatience, did individuals have which determined the course of the story?
In what ways do you see these qualities in younger and older persons you know?

Values and goals

What did younger and older individuals in the story value most?
Give examples of behaviors that reflect these values.
What did younger and older individuals want out of life? What were their goals?
In what ways do you see people today seeking similar goals?

Adapted with permission from Pratt, Fran.
Language Arts Activities for Teaching about Aging.
Framingham, MA: Center for Understanding Aging,
Framingham State College, 1981.

LESSON 12

Rediscover Children's Literature

Introduction

Children's literature provides a vehicle for multiple learning activities for secondary students. In this series of activities, students practice analytical reading and writing skills, using children's literature about older adults.

Objectives

Students will:

- analyze children's literature depicting older persons;
- read books aloud to young children; and
- write their own children's story related to aging and intergenerational relationships.

Materials

Children's books about aging and intergenerational relationships (see pages 28-34)

Procedures

1. Introduce the unit by asking students what names they have heard used for grandmothers and grandfathers. Some names are specific to individual families. Others reflect different languages or ethnic backgrounds. Discuss the growing importance of relationships children have with their grandparents and other older adults. Since more people live to an old age, younger people have more opportunities to interact with and relate to older people. In terms of literature (and television and motion pictures), more stories include persons of three, even four generations. Explain the objectives of this unit. If possible, show examples of children's books and the names given to grandparents. Below are some examples of grandparents' names from books listed in the accompanying bibliography.
    - "Nana," in *Waiting for Noah,* by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim;
    - "Oma," in *Gretchen's Grandma,* by Phyllis Root and Carol Marron;
    - "Starenka," in *A Visit with Great-Grandma,* by Sharon Hart Addy;
    - "Bigmama" in *Bigmama's,* by Donald Crews;
    - "Abuela," in *Abuela,* by Arthur Dorros;
    - "Grammy," in *Grammy's House,* by Eve Rice;
    - "Granzy," in *Granzy Remembers,* by Mary Grace Ketner;
    - "Babushka," in *Thundercake,* by Patricia Polacco; and
    - "Tut," in *I Visit My Tutu and Grandma,* by Nancy Alpert Mower.

2. Have students bring in children's books or take students to an elementary school library to conduct a content analysis of children's literature. The teacher can focus on intergenerational issues or on aging. As students review the books, they record the title, author and general theme, and what underlying messages students might receive about what it means to be old. How did the books handle more sensitive topics, such as death? Were there topics related to aging that were not addressed in the books they reviewed? Discuss students' findings. The most common theme in children's books is the mutually satisfying relationship between grandparent and grandchild. The grandparent's unconditional love allows honest conversations with young children.

3. Students should select between three and five of their favorite books to read to young children. They may read the books to younger siblings or neighborhood children. Arrangements can be made for students to volunteer in elementary school classrooms or in after-school reading programs.

   Discuss the importance of choosing books that portray a balanced view of aging. Since only about five percent of persons over 65 are in nursing homes, it would not be balanced to read books only about older people who are physically or mentally impaired. Students should select books that present a diversity of cultural, racial and health status. The accompanying annotated list of children's literature (pages 28-34) shows a variety of books which may be available through local libraries.

4. After reading to young children, students write a short reaction paper to the experience of reading to children and to the responses from these children to the readings.

5. Next, have students write their own children's stories related to aging or intergenerational relationships. The stories should be about something real to them. The characters and themes of their stories should provide a fresh, creative approach to the general topic of aging or intergenerational relationships – something they have not read in other children's books. The writing process will involve several drafts and revisions. Organize students into cooperative learning groups to suggest possible ways to improve their classmates' stories.

Extension Activities

- Have students serve as reading partners with elementary students or even read to latchkey children over the phone after school when these children are without adult supervision.

- Have students help elementary students write and illustrate their own children's stories.

- Invite older adults to join in the children's literature project. They can be part of the student learning groups or collaborate with students on a joint project.

- Give the accompanying annotated bibliography to town and school librarians. An organization representing older adults might be willing to contribute to the purchase of books that promote understanding and appreciation of older adults.

- Encourage students to illustrate their stories. Some students might work collaboratively on the project, with some writing the text and others illustrating the story.

- Present the collection of children's stories written by students to a town or school library. Encourage students to present their stories to family members as gifts.

- Examine multicultural relationships presented in children's literature, using the list of books under *multicultural relationships* in the accompanying annotated bibliography.

Children's Literature On Aging: Annotated Bibliography

(For Use With Lesson 12 On Page 26)

Intergenerational Relationships

Ackerman, Karen. *Song and Dance Man.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988. Grandpa performs some of his old vaudeville routines for his visiting grandchildren.

Blos, Joan W. *The Grandpa Days.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. Grandfather and Philip build a sled during their week together.

Borack, Barbara. *Grandpa.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967. A very personable story of a little girl who loves to visit her grandfather – told from her point of view.

Brooks, Ron. *Timothy and Gramps.* New York: Bradbury Press, 1978. Timothy enjoys school more after his grandfather visits for show and tell. (Gramps smokes a pipe.)

Burningham, John. *Granpa.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1984. A little girl and her grandfather share a special relationship with often-disjointed conversations. (Granpa's pipe sits on the table in several illustrations.)

Burt, Denise. *I Love My Grandma.* Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1985. Grandmother and Sara enjoy a day together. (Color photo story.)

Carlstrom, Nancy White. *Grandpappy.* New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1990. Nate shares everyday adventures and gathers bits of wisdom from his grandfather on the Maine coast. (Lovely art.)

Caseley, Judith. *Dear Annie.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991. Annie and her loving grandfather have a very special relationship – they have been pen pals since her birth. (Nice illustrations and concept.)

Edwards, Patricia Kier. *Chester and Uncle Willoughby.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1987. Chester and old Uncle Willoughby develop a special friendship by exchanging thoughts and stories.

Gauch, Patricia Lee. *Grandpa and Me.* New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1972. A boy spends a day with his grandfather exploring the shore and sharing good feelings.

Goldman, Susan. *Grandma is Somebody Special.* Chicago: Albert Whitman & Company, 1976. A young girl enjoys visiting her grandmother. This urban grandmother works in an office and attends school. She is also a good listener and enjoys the special time with her grandchild. (Simple text.)

Hedderwick, Mairi. *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1985. Katie Morag has two very different grandmothers – plain Grannie Island and sophisticated Granma Mainland.

This annotated bibliography was prepared
by Debra Neary of Rainbow Rompers Family
Day Care Home in Southington and is used with permission.

Henkes, Kevin. *Grandpa and Bo*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1986. Bo has a wonderful time spending the summer in the country with his grandfather.

Hest, Amy. *The Crack of Dawn Walkers*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984. It is Sadie's turn to take the coveted early Sunday morning walk with Grandfather, sharing the routine stops and special time alone with him. Next week will be younger brother Ben's turn.

Hest, Amy. *The Midnight Eaters*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1989. Samantha and Nana (her temporary roommate) secretly share ice cream sundaes and look at old photos in the middle of the night.

Hest, Amy. *The Purple Coat*. New York: Macmillan, 1986. Gabrielle's Grampa operates a tailor shop in the city, and together they plan this year's coat (not quite what Mom expected!).

Hughes, Shirley. *When We Went to the Park*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1985. On a stroll through the park, a little girl and her grandfather count the things they see. (A good choice for the very young.)

Hurd, Edith Thacher. *I Dance in My Red Pajamas*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982. Jenny spends a "beautiful, lovely, noisy day" with her active grandparents.

Ketner, Mary Grace. *Granzy Remembers*. New York: Atheneum, 1991. Granzy tells her great granddaughter tales about her childhood on a Texas farm.

Kroll, Steven. *If I Could Be My Grandmother*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977. A little girl describes what she would do if she were her grandmother. (Cute, simple text.)

Lap, Eleanor J. *In the Morning Mist*. Chicago: Albert Whitman & Company, 1978. A grandfather and young child share an early morning fishing expedition. (Simple text, lots of nature.)

Lasky, Kathryn. *I Have Four Names for My Grandfather*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1979. Tom describes his close relationship with his grandfather. (Simple text, nice black and white photos.)

Moore, Elaine. *Grandma's House*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1985. A young girl spends very special summers with her grandmother in the country.

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Always Gramma*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1988. A little girl recalls the wonderful times she had with her grandmother before her memory loss. (Based on the author's experience.)

Oppenheim, Shulamith Levey. *Waiting for Noah*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990. Noah asks Nana to repeat the story of how she spent the day awaiting his birth.

Otto, Carolyn. *That Sky, That Rain*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1990. A girl and her grandfather check on the farm animals as it begins to rain. (Brief text, nice illustrations.)

Palmisciano, Diane. *Garden Partners.* New York: Atheneum, 1989. A young girl and her grandmother plant seeds, tend the garden all summer and host a neighborhood harvest party.

Ricklen, Neil. *Grandma and Me.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988. A Chubby board book featuring toddlers engaging in various activities with their grandmothers. (For the very young.)

Ridyard, David. *Grandpa Loves Us.* Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1985. Abby and Sally look forward to spending time with Grandpa. (A photo story.)

Schertle, Alice. *William and Grandpa.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1989. William and Grandpa spend a day together doing things like trying to jump on their shadows, watching stars from the roof and singing.

Shecter, Ben. *Grandma Remembers.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989. A boy and his grandmother take one last walk through her now-empty house, reliving the memories it holds.

Silverman, Erica. *On Grandma's Roof.* New York: Macmillan, 1990. Emily helps her grandmother hang laundry on the roof. While it dries, they chat, picnic and play together.

Skorpen, Liesel Moak. *Mandy's Grandmother.* New York: Dial Press, 1975. Mandy and her visiting grandmother learn to love and accept each other's differences.

Vigna, Judith. *Grandma Without Me.* Chicago: Albert Whitman & Company, 1984. A young boy keeps in touch with his paternal grandmother through the use of a scrapbook after his parents' divorce.

Waddell, Martin. *My Great Grandpa.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1990. A young girl describes her special times with her great-grandfather. (Cute illustrations and verse.)

Williams, Vera B. *A Chair for My Mother.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982. A child, her waitress mother and grandmother, who all live together, save their pocket change to buy a comfortable armchair for their apartment. (Shows multigenerational love and cooperation.)

Zolotow, Charlotte. *I Know a Lady.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1984. Sally describes a loving old woman in her neighborhood who grows flowers, bakes and knows her neighbors by name.

Multicultural Relationships

Addy, Sharon Hart. *A Visit with Great-Grandma.* Chicago: Albert Whitman and Company, 1989. Baruska (Barbara) visits her Starenka (great-grandmother), who is from Czechoslovakia and speaks very little English. They enjoy a special afternoon together baking and looking at old photos.

Base, Graeme. *My Grandma Lived in Gooligulch.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1990. A story of an adventurous grandmother who lives "down under." (Silly rhyming verse with an introduction to Australian animals and birds.)

Bonners, Susan. *The Wooden Doll*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1991. Stephanie visits her Polish immigrant grandparents and learns the origin of her grandfather's wooden matreshka doll. (Lovely art.)

Crews, Donald. *Bigmama's*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991. The annual visit to Bigmama's (Grandmother's) house in the South is full of excitement for the grandchildren. (African American)

Daly, Niki. *Not So Fast, Songololo*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985. Gogo Shepherd's grandma plans a shopping trip into the city and takes him along to help her. They have a wonderful time together and she buys him new "tackies" (sneakers). (African American)

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1991. Rosalba and Abuela (Grandmother) take an imaginary trip together, flying over New York City. The story is spiced with Spanish phrases. (The collage illustrations are so colorful that the city looks like a treasure!)

Greenfield, Eloise. *Grandpa's Face*. New York: Philomel Books, 1988. Tamika learns that despite her grandfather's many faces, he will always love her. They take talk-walks together. (African American)

Johnson, Angela. *When I Am Old with You*. New York: Orchard Books, 1990. A child imagines being old with Granddaddy and joining him in his activities. (Lovely watercolor illustrations, simple text. African American)

Johnson, Dolores. *What Kind of Baby-sitter Is This?* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991. Kevin dislikes babysitters until he meets Mrs. Lovey Pritchard, who loves baseball. (The author/illustrator was born and raised in New Britain, Conn. African American)

Langer, Nola. *Freddy My Grandfather*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1979. A young girl describes her Hungarian-born grandfather, a retired tailor. (Based on the author's experience with her own grandfather, who encouraged her to pursue her aspirations.)

Martin, Bill Jr., and Archambault, John. *Knots on a Counting Rope*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1987. Grandfather retells Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses the events surrounding his birth. They also discuss the boy's greatest challenge – his blindness. The counting rope signifies the passing of time. (Native American)

Miles, Miska. *Annie and the Old One*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1971. The Old One (Annie's Navajo grandmother) announces that when the new rug is complete, she will go to Mother Earth. Annie plots to keep the rug from being finished, but in the end learns ancient wisdom. (Native American)

Mower, Nancy Alpert. *I Visit My Tutu and Grandma*. Waipahu, HI: Press Pacifica, 1984. Although she calls them by different names, a young girl shares similar activities with both her Hawaiian and Caucasian grandmothers. (Hawaiian phrases)

Nomura, Takaaki. *Grandpa's Town*. New York: Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1989. A young Japanese boy, concerned that his grandfather may be lonely, accompanies him to the public bath. Along the way he meets his grandfather's many friends. (Written in Japanese and English.)

Pearson, Susan. *Happy Birthday, Grampie*. New York: Dial Books, 1987. Martha makes a special birthday gift for her 89-year-old Swedish grandfather, who is blind and lives in a special home.

Polacco, Patricia. *Thundercake*. New York: Philomel Books, 1990. A Russian grandmother helps her granddaughter overcome her fear of thunderstorms by having her collect the ingredients for a special cake. (Farm setting)

Rice, Eve. *At Grammy's House*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1990. A brother and sister visit their French grandparents on their farm. (Simple text with N.W. Parker's illustrations.)

Root, Phyllis, and Marron, Carol. *Gretchen's Grandma*. Shaker Heights, OH: Raintree Publishers, Inc., 1983. Gretchen has an enjoyable time with her German grandmother in spite of their language differences.

Russo, Marisabina. *A Visit to Oma*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991. When a language barrier prevents a young girl from understanding, she makes up imaginary stories to fit her great-grandmother's gestures. (Bold art and borders.)

Rylant, Cynthia. *Miss Maggie*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1983. Young Nat becomes friends with Miss Maggie, an old tobacco-chewing Appalachian woman, whom he had previously feared.

Sakai, Kimiko. *Sachiko Means Happiness*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1990. Initially, Sachiko is upset that her grandmother no longer knows who she is, but she discovers that they still can be happy together. (Japanese)

Tompert, Ann. *Grandfather Tang's Story*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1990. Grandfather tells Little Soo a tangram story about shape-changing fox fairies. (Japanese)

Tusa, Tricia. *Maebelle's Suitcase*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987. A funny story about a 108-year-old woman who makes a sacrifice to help her friend – a young bird – make his first flight south. (A Reading Rainbow Book. African American)

Udry, Janice May. *Mary Jo's Grandmother*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 1970. Mary Jo bravely goes for help when her rural-living grandmother falls and can't move. (African American)

Coping With Loss

Aliki. *The Two of Them*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1979. This book follows the loving relationship between a grandfather and his granddaughter as they trade caregiver roles over the years.

Carlstrom, Nancy White. *Blow Me a Kiss, Miss Lilly*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990. Sara has a special relationship with her elderly neighbor. Miss Lilly dies, but memories of her don't.

Curtis, Gavin. *Grandma's Baseball*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1990. A young boy learns to see past his grandmother's grumpiness when she comes to live with his family after his grandfather's death.

Delton, Judy. *My Grandma's in a Nursing Home*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Co., 1986. Jason dislikes his first visit to a nursing home to visit his grandmother, but as he returns he finds his visits make a difference to his grandmother and the other residents. (Alzheimer's, false teeth, wheelchairs)

de Paola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973. Tommy visits his grandmother's every Sunday. Nana Upstairs (great-grandmother) is 94 and bedridden but enjoys chatting and sharing candy with him. Nana Downstairs (grandmother) bakes cakes for his visit.

de Paola, Tomie. *Now One Foot, Now the Other*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1981. When Grandfather Bob suffers a stroke, Bobby helps him learn to walk, just as his grandfather once taught him.

Farber, Norma. *How Does It Feel to be Old?* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979. A grandmother explains some of her thoughts and feelings that accompany her advancing age. (A little somber for the very young.)

Fox, Mem. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. New York: Kane/Miller Book Publishing, 1985. A young boy seeks to find out what a memory is so that he can restore the lost one of an elderly friend. (Sweet story)

Guthrie, Donna. *A Rose for Abby*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988. Abby observes an old street woman searching through trash cans and is inspired to do something to help the street people in her neighborhood. She is assisted by several older neighbors who join her efforts. (African American)

Hamm, Diane Johnston. *Grandma Drives a Motor Bed*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 1987. Josh and his grandmother share some good times together, even though her illness confines her to bed. This book is very honest. Gram wears diapers and sometimes the room smells. Josh notices tears in her eyes when Grampa (primary caregiver) give her a backrub.

Harranth, Wold. *My Old Grandad*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. After Grannie's death, Grandad tries living with his family in the city, but is not happy and returns to the country.

Henriod, Lorraine. Grandma's Wheelchair. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 1982. Four-year-old Thomas visits his grandmother every morning. She is confined to a wheelchair, yet they find many things to do together.

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Remember the Butterflies*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1991. Holly and Glen discover a dead butterfly. Their grandfather sensitively leads them in a celebration of its life, which they repeat when their grandfather dies.

Johnston, Tony. *Grandpa's Song.* New York: Dial Books, 1991. Grandpa loves to sing, but when he becomes forgetful of the words, his granddaughter sings his favorite songs back to him.

Keller, Holly. *The Best Present.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1989. When Rosie is not allowed to visit her grandmother in the hospital because of an age restriction, she secretly sends her flowers. When Grandma returns from the hospital, she acknowledges Rosie's thoughtfulness.

Kibbey, Marsha. *My Grammy.* Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 1988. Eight-year-old Amy learns to be patient when she has to share her room with her grandmother, who suffers from Alzheimer's Disease. A portion of the proceeds from the book are donated to Alzheimer's research.

Kirk, Barbara. *Grandpa, Me and our House in the Tree.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1978. Nico and his grandfather share a relationship and a tree house that they built together, in spite of Grandfather's weakening physical health. (A black and white photo story.)

Knox-Wagner, Elaine. *My Grandpa Retired Today.* Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 1982. Margey helps her Grandfather clean up the barber shop for the last time and experiences his emotions with him.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Through Granpa's Eyes.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979. John's blind grandfather helps him to experience the world with senses other than sight. (Thought provoking – a Reading Rainbow book.)

Schwartz, David M. *Supergrandpa.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1991. A 66-year-old grandfather who is barred from entering the 1,000-mile Tour of Sweden bicycle race defies the judges and wins the race unofficially. (Great illustrations of a white bushy-bearded man on a bike.)

Whittman, Sally. *A Special Trade.* New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978. From the time she is a toddler, Nelly and Bartholomew, her neighbor, are inseparable. Bartholomew walks Nelly in the stroller when she is little and the story ends with Nelly walking Bartholomew in a wheelchair. (A very loving and sensitive story.)

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by Debra Neary of Rainbow Rompers Family
Day Care Home in Southington and is used with permission.

LESSON 13

But Grandmother, Please!

Introduction

Communication and relationships in multigenerational families can be complicated. This activity can be used as an introduction or follow-up to reading assignments dealing with multigenerational families. It also can be incorporated into units dealing with interpersonal communication and script or play writing. It is appropriate for units combining such disciplines as health, home economics, sociology and language arts.

Objectives

Students will:

- identify needs of persons in a multigenerational family;
- consider more- and less-effective communication patterns; and
- practice oral and writing skills.

Key Terms

interpersonal communication, multigenerational families, family dynamics

Materials

Handouts: "But Grandmother, Please!" and "Improving Communication Patterns" (see pages 37-42); rolling pin, table, chairs

Procedures

1. Assign selected students to the four roles in the skit (see handout) or ask for volunteers. Students may review the skit before reading it to the class as an informal presentation.

2. Ask how many students have grandparents living nearby. Living with them? Introduce the skit as an example of possible dynamics and communication within multigenerational families.

3. Students present the skit for the class. Ask the class how realistic they think the skit is. Discuss the respective needs of the players.

4. If the skit is used as part of a unit on effective communication, discuss the skit by using the handout on page 41. Allow students to discuss each section in small groups before processing the information with the entire class. While there are no right or wrong answers for the problem-ownership questions, there are better and worse responses. In general, when someone expresses a problem, a person should listen, acknowledge feelings about the problem, and encourage the individual to explore solutions. Less-effective responses are giving advice, sarcasm or criticism. (If the skit is used as part of a writing unit, ask groups of students to develop a sequel to the skit. Students may introduce other players, such as the father or friends of the grandmother, mother or children.)

Extension Activities

- Groups of students may rewrite different sections of the skit so that better communication is used. Contrast the original skit with students' revised versions. Note that family scenes that include effective communication may not make it on the "soaps," but can promote a more open and caring family life.

- Divide the class into groups of four. Have each group member represent one of the four roles in the skit. For homework, students should write a diary entry about their feelings, thoughts and desires based on the skit. The following day, have students read aloud their diary entries to their "families" in a mock family meeting. Students can discuss each others' writings while "acting" as family members. Allow sufficient time for group discussion. Process the discussion with questions about what they liked or disliked about their roles, what they learned and whether any of the families were able to resolve their problems.

But Grandmother, Please!

(For Use With Lesson 13 On Page 35)

Cast: Laura, the mother — Nellie, the grandmother
Betsy, the daughter, 16 — Bill, the son, 14

Props: Rolling pin, table, two chairs

(Laura is rolling out pie crust at the kitchen table. Enter Nellie, who watches Laura for a minute, cocking her head this way and that.)

NELLIE You know, dear . . .

LAURA Yes, Mother Johnson?

NELLIE *(sighs)* Why don't you just call me mother, Laura?

LAURA Well . . . *(she sighs, too)* . . . I guess it's because 'mother' means my own mother to me and nobody else.

NELLIE *(hurt)* I guess there's no answer to that. It's a little hard, you know, not to feel wanted in my own son's home. *(takes out handkerchief and blows nose)*

LAURA *(puts rolling pin down hard)* I didn't mean it like that at all!

NELLIE *(puts handkerchief away)* It's all right, dear. *(cheerfully)* You'd get a more flaky crust, Laura, if you wouldn't handle it so much.

LAURA *(wipes back of hand across forehead; speaks in a tight controlling voice)* Would you like to finish making the pies, Mother Johnson?

NELLIE Oh, I wouldn't dream of interfering. I wish I could find some little thing to do this morning, though. You know an old woman likes to feel useful.

LAURA I know. *(pause)* You could dust the living room. I didn't get at it yesterday.

NELLIE *(reproachfully)* Why, Laura, have you forgotten how dust affects me? I get so choked up I can hardly breathe. Dr. Carlson says . . .

LAURA You told me what Dr. Carlson says at least seven times!

NELLIE *(humbly)* I know I forget things, Laura. When you get to be my age, you'll realize how it is.

Written by Helena Stainton, Department of Child Development and Family Relationships, New York State College of Home Economics at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (date unknown).
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LAURA *(warmly)* I know. I'm sorry, dear.

NELLIE But the dust . . . it chokes me so that . . .

LAURA *(harshly)* I know! What a dreadful time you must have had keeping house for 40 years.

NELLIE Not at all. I was a good housekeeper, if I do say it. In fact, it seems to me that modern methods and all these electrical gadgets have just made women grow slovenly.

LAURA *(dryly)* I'm sure they have.

NELLIE I can remember many's the day I never sat down except to eat, from the time I got up until I went to bed.

LAURA Feeling like a martyr, I expect.

NELLIE What? My goodness, you're touchy this morning!

LAURA Sorry. *(pause)* If you really want something to do, Mother Johnson, there are socks that need darning. They're on the sewing machine and the work basket is . . .

NELLIE Know what I think I'll do? Change my shoes and walk into town.

LAURA Anything special? I could take you this afternoon.

NELLIE It's a surprise. Is that special enough?

LAURA You're <u>not</u> going to buy something for Betsy again?

NELLIE Oh, I don't know, I might.

LAURA Mother Johnson . . . please!

NELLIE Why shouldn't I buy a few pretties for my only granddaughter?

LAURA Of course it's awfully generous of you and we appreciate it, but . . . Betsy is 16 and girls that age really like to choose things for themselves. And they should.

NELLIE Nonsense. A 16-year-old girl has no idea of what's suitable.

LAURA Maybe not, but she does know what her crowd wears . . . and that's what is suitable in her language.

NELLIE If you could see what I'm going to get her this morning, you'd be completely convinced.

LAURA What is it?

NELLIE Well . . . oh, I shouldn't tell . . . a party dress! I saw it in the window at Newton's and . . .

LAURA What kind of dress?

NELLIE The prettiest thing! It's white tulle with pink rosebuds around the . . .

LAURA But Mother Johnson, Betsy hates white, and I can't say I blame her. She looks like sin in it.

NELLIE A fine thing to say about your own daughter! And it's not true; all young girls look well in white.

LAURA Not Betsy. Please don't get the dress, Mother Johnson.

NELLIE Oh, you haven't seen it. You can't say a word. Well, I'd better be getting along. *(She exits as Laura raises rolling pin protestingly.)*

LAURA Oh, dear! *(enter Betsy, who sits on corner of table)*

LAURA Don't sit there, dear. You'll get flour on your slacks.

BETSY It brushes off. What's your trouble? Grandma in your hair again?

LAURA *(quickly)* Oh, no. *(pause)* You know what she's doing now? Going to town to buy you a party dress.

BETSY Well, it's an idea. What like?

LAURA White tulle with pink rosebuds.

BETSY Sounds revolting. Let's hope it won't fit. Say, you got anything around here to eat?

LAURA It's almost lunch time.

BETSY Guess I can wait, if I tighten my belt. Bill up yet?

BILL *(enters)* I sure am. I been sitting in the dining room for an hour.

LAURA Not listening?

BILL Sort of. Say, mom, why don't you give the old girl a powder? How about getting the old girl to live someplace else?

LAURA Bill! I'm ashamed of you. And your grandmother is so good to you, too.

BILL Yeah, she's all right in some ways. But why don't you? After all, she's not poor or anything. She could live somewhere else and we could see her often enough. That would be fun, but this way. . .

LAURA Bill, I won't listen to another word. It's dreadful to talk like that. And Grandma really hasn't enough money to live alone. You think so, because she spends everything on you and Betsy.

BILL Well, that's nice of her.

LAURA Of course it is, and she's not very well either, so that . . .

BETSY Great! She imagines more things are the matter with her. She can't eat this and she can't . . .

LAURA I know.

BILL Well, it's hard enough to get along with people your own age! Parents don't know what the score is half the time, but it seems like grandparents never do.

BETSY That's the truth. Grandma's always after me about my clothes or my hair or something. It's too dreadful. Why can't she leave me alone?

BILL Me, too. Isn't there anything we can do?

LAURA We can try harder to get along. I know I should.

BILL Trying is no good, either.

LAURA I wish I knew. . . an answer. *(puts head down on arms . . . Bill and Betsy move in and put hands on her shoulders)*

Written by Helena Stainton, Department of Child Development and Family Relationships, New York State College of Home Economics at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (date unknown). Printed with permission of Cornell University.

Improving Communication Patterns

(For Use With Lesson 13 On Page 35)

Sometimes people try to take over another person's problem by becoming unnecessarily involved or trying to solve the problem themselves. A better approach would be to encourage the person to find his or her own solutions. Other times people criticize, minimize or ignore another person's problem. The effects of these responses usually are misunderstandings and ill feelings. These counterproductive communication patterns are common among younger and older parent-child relationships as illustrated by the skit.

What Do You Think?

A. Based on the skit, whom do you think rightfully owns the problem in the circumstances below? Write the person's name (Nellie, Laura, Betsy or Bill) next to each circumstance.

_____ 1. Nellie wants to be called "Mother."
_____ 2. Nellie does not feel wanted in her son's house.
_____ 3. Nellie wants something to do to feel useful.
_____ 4. Nellie gives Laura unwanted cooking tips.
_____ 5. Nellie repeats several times her breathing difficulty around dust.
_____ 6. Nellie is buying Betsy a dress.
_____ 7. Betsy gets flour on her slacks.
_____ 8. Bill wants his grandmother to move out of their house.
_____ 9. Laura feels guilty and desperate about the situation.

B. Laura, the mother, seems to feel responsible for everyone's feelings. (1) Give examples of the three different responses listed below which Laura uses. (2) Then note the reactions of others to these responses. For example, do they become more argumentative? Does it tend to stop the conversation? Does it change the direction of the conversation? (3) Suggest alternative ways Laura might respond so as to encourage acceptance and problem solving from others. How can Laura let other family members know that she understands how they feel? How can she encourage them to seek positive solutions?

Laura gives advice

(1) What Laura says or does:
(2) Response from others:
(3) Alternative response for Laura:

Laura criticizes a person

(1) What Laura says or does:
(2) Response from others:
(3) Alternative response for Laura:

(continued)

Laura is sarcastic, gives up or gives in

(1) What Laura says or does:
(2) Response from others:
(3) Alternative response for Laura:

C. What do you think Nellie, Betsy and Bill could do as individuals to improve the overall family atmosphere?

D. What do you think is an important lesson that families can learn from the skit?

SELECTED READINGS ABOUT OLDER ADULTS
Short Stories

Aldrich, Bess Streeter. "Bid the Tapers Twinkle" and "The Mountains Look On Marathon," in *The Man Who Caught the Weather and Other Stories,* 1936. In the first story an old woman faces the possibility of celebrating her first Christmas without her family. In the second an old judge is torn between "roughing" it and being pampered by his son and daughter-in-law.

Auchincloss, Louis. "Suttee," "The Cathedral Builder," "The Double Gap" and "The Waiver," in *Second Chance: Tales of Two Generations*, 1970. Each of these stories deals with a well-to-do elderly person and his or her relations with other people of various ages.

Auchincloss, Louis. "Sabina and the Herd," "The Landmarker" and "The Senior Partner's Ghost," in *Tales of Manhattan*, 1967. The tales deal with a 70-year-old mother and her herd of daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren; with a 70-year-old man who becomes bored with his previous mode of existence; and with an old lawyer's integrity.

Babel, Isaac. "Sunset," in *You Must Know Everything*, 1969. Depicts conflict between father and sons in the Jewish quarter of Odessa in early 20th century Russia.

Babel, Isaac. "The End of the Almshouse," in *Lyubka the Cossack and Other Stories*, 1963. Deals with the fate of the old in a home for the aged in early Soviet Russia.

Bates, H.E. "The Major of Hussars," "Time" and "Where the Cloud Breaks," in *The Best of H.E. Bates*, 1963. The first story deals with a major, whose efforts to resist aging bring him trouble in the form of a young wife. The second deals with three old men, the oldest being the most active. The final story is a charming and somewhat tragic one in which a lonely old man and old woman almost overcome their loneliness through love.

Beckett, Samuel. "The End," in *Stories and Texts for Nothing*, 1967. The story, like so many of Beckett's works, touches on negative aspects of old age, in this case poverty, homelessness and social isolation.

Bellow, Saul. "Leaving the Yellow House," in *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories*, 1968. A woman in her 70s living alone in the desert attempts to cope with loneliness and medical and financial problems.

Bontemps, Arna. "A Summer Tragedy," in *Black Voices*, 1968. A husband and wife who have share-cropped some land for almost 50 years attempt to move away to new land and tragedy results.

Buck, Pearl. "The Old Demon," in *This Is My Best*, Whit Burnett (ed.), 1942. An old woman manifests a type of courage that is related at least partially to her age when her Chinese village is invaded by the Japanese.

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the Southeastern Michigan Consortium on Gerontology
and the Humanities (a cooperative effort of Eastern Michigan University
and Charles Stewart Mott, Jackson, Monroe County and Washtenaw
Community Colleges). August 1974. Adapted and reprinted with permission.

Buck, Pearl. "The Old Mother," in *Hearts Come Home*, 1962. An old Chinese mother is criticized by her son and daughter-in-law, with whom she lives, for her old-fashioned ways.

Bunin, Ivan. "The Gentleman from San Francisco," in *The Gentleman from San Francisco and Other Stories*, 1923. A man waits until his late 50s to begin to live, but finds he does not really know how to do so.

Canfield, Dorothy. "Old Man Warner," "Sex Education" and "The Heyday of the Blood," in *Harvest of Stories*, 1957. The first and last stories are affectionate and sympathetic portraits of independent old men. The second reflects the wisdom that can come with age.

Cather, Willa. "Neighbor Rosicky," in *Obscure Destinies*, 1930. A kind and wise old Nebraska farmer is portrayed within a family context.

Cather, Willa. "The Old Beauty," in *The Old Beauty and Others*, 1948. A long, bittersweet and nostalgic tale of the effect of time on a once-beautiful and charming woman.

Chekhov, Anton. "A Dull Story: From the Notebook of an Old Man," in *Ward Six and Other Stories*, 1965. An old professor facing death reviews his life and finds it meaningless.

Chekhov, Anton. "The Peasants," in *Great Stories by Chekhov*, 1959. An excellent depiction of the life of a three-generational Russian peasant family at the end of the 19th century. (Also available in Talking Books under the title *Peasants, and Other Stories.*)

Ferber, Edna. "Old Lady Mandle," "Old Man Minick," "The Gay Old Dog" and "The Sudden Sixties," in *One Basket*, 1947. Four excellent stories in which elderly people, all without a living husband or wife, attempt to relate in a successful way to their children or other kin.

Goodman, Paul. "A Cross-Country Runner at Sixty-Five," in *Adam and His Works*, 1968. What makes a man continue to run at 65?

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "Old Esther Dudley" and "The Village Uncle," in *Twice-Told Tales*, 1911. Stories of a fountain-of-youth experiment, an old British loyalist who clings to her ways and an old storyteller.

Lessing, Doris. "Flight," in *The Short Story: An Inductive Approach*, Gerald Levin (ed.), 1967. An aged keeper of pigeons reluctantly resigns himself to the inevitable marriage of his last young granddaughter.

London, Jack. "The Law of Life," in *The Best Short Stories of Jack London*, 1953. An aged Eskimo on the trail embraces valiantly his inevitable place in the cycle of nature.

Mansfield, Katherine. "Miss Brill," in *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, 1954. The loneliness of a sensitive, little old lady is unexpectedly intensified in the midst of one of her few supremely happy moments.

Marshall, Paule. "Barbados," "Brazil," "British Guiana" and "Brooklyn," in *Soul Clap Hands and Sing*, 1961. Each of these stories by this daughter of Barbadian parents deals with an elderly man who is confronted by a crisis or a change in his pattern of life.

Maupassant, Guy de. "A Family," "A Humble Drama," "An Old Man," "Growing Old," "Julie Romain," "Old Amable," "Old Milon," "The Love of Long Ago," "The Mask" and "The Old Man," in *The Complete Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant*, 1955. Excellent depictions of aging and the aged by this 19th century French master of the short story.

O'Connor, Flannery. "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "A Late Encounter With the Enemy," "Everything That Rises Must Converge" and "Judgment Day," in *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*, 1971. The first, third and fourth stories are concerned, in part, with an elderly person's relationship with a grown son or daughter. The final story also is an excellent depiction of the difficulty an old man has in adjusting to a new environment. The second story concerns a centenarian.

O'Hara, John. "The Friends of Miss Julia," "The Manager" and "The Man on the Tractor," in *The Hat on the Bed*, 1963. Just a few of the many short stories O'Hara wrote about elderly people in the last decade of his life. "The Manager" is an especially good reflection of some common social attitudes toward the elderly.

Paton, Alan. "A Life for a Life," in *Tales From A Troubled Land*, 1961. An aged Hottentot is serving as chief shepherd to a European. When the latter is found murdered, police force the old shepherd to search for the murderer, despite the fact that the latter is his own son. (Illustrative of the helplessness of the black aged in South Africa.)

Price, Reynolds. "Uncle Grant," in *Modern Short Stories: The Uses of Imagination*, Arthur Mizener (ed.), 1967. A young man tells a wonderfully absorbing account of an old man who was part of his family setting for many years.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. "The Old Man" and "The Spinoza of Market Street," in *Selected Short Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, 1966. Each tells the story of an amazing old man in Warsaw.

Steinbeck, John. "The Great Mountain" and "The Leader of the People," in *The Long Valley*, 1938. The first story is of an old man looking for a place to die and the second of an old man who talks too much of the past to suit his son-in-law.

Stuart, Jesse. "Another April," in *This Is My Best*, Whit Burnett (ed.), 1942. A 91-year-old man remains alive to the wonders of nature, as his daughter and grandson fondly observe.

Svevo, Italo. "Death" and "The Story of the Nice Old Man and the Pretty Girl," in *Short Sentimental Journey and Other Stories*, 1967. As is the case so often in Svevo's fiction, the central character of both stories is an old man who reflects on aging.

Taylor, Peter. "What You Hear From 'Em?" in *Modern Short Stories: The Uses of Imagination*, Arthur Mizener (ed.), 1967. A proud old black woman tries courageously to face inevitable changing social conditions which will render her place in society obsolete. (Also available in Talking Books in *The Collected Stories of Peter Taylor.*)

Walker, Alice. "To Hell With Dying," in *The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers*, Lanston Hughes (ed.), 1967. A wonderfully detailed account is given of an aged black man who, it seems, will never die, but he finally does.

Welty, Eudora. "A Visit of Charity," in *Selected Stories*, 1954. Depicts the visit of a Campfire Girl to an old ladies' home and the discomfort she feels when visiting two old ladies. Good brief picture of some of the indignities suffered by the aged in some institutions.

Novels

Achebe, Chinus. *Arrow of God*, 1967. An aged African chief-priest chooses to resist the intrusion of European religion into the domain of his god. Although physically infirmed, he battles on spiritual grounds, pitting the god of his people against the god of the whites. The resulting struggle drives him to madness, and symbolizes the destruction of the traditional West African spirit worship by the African followers of Christ.

Achebe, Chinus. *Things Fall Apart,* 1959. A respected African elder chooses to resist the intrusion of European ways that are causing the traditional bonds of his society to fall apart. Receiving no support from either his age-mates or his descendants, he is driven to suicide.

Aksakev, S.T. *The Family Chronicle*, 1961. A good picture of a patriarchal grandfather on the Russian frontier at the end of the 18th century.

Amis, Kingsley. *Girl 20,* 1971. A 54-year-old violinist-conductor resists aging by taking a 17-year-old mistress in this biting satire.

Bagnold, Enid. *The Loved and the Envied*, 1951. The life, loves and difficulty with her daughter are related in this portrait of 53-year-old Lady MacLean and how she confronts aging.

Baird, Thomas. *People Who Pull You Down*, 1970. Lydia Cowdory, 75, suddenly runs away from home and leaves no clues for the two brothers she has cared for since her husband's death. The book says much about loneliness and alienation in America today.

Balzac, Honore de. *Pere Goriot,* 1950. This 19th century classic relates how Goriot rose from a country provincial to a Parisian aristocrat and his fall and sacrifices because of the love for two ungrateful daughters.

Beckett, Samuel. *Malone Dies*, 1956. All we know in the novel is that old Malone is dying. He tells stories to himself, the events become violent, crowded and hallucinatory. At the end Malone is dead, having wondered what the true meaning of life is and concluding that it is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Bellow, Saul. *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, 1970. An aged Polish-Jew, a scholar and philosopher who survived the Nazi camps, moves to New York and speculates on the present and future of life.

Bennett, Jack. *The Hawk Alone,* 1965. A 70-year-old white man from South Africa discovers that his skill, standards and moral code toward hunting are not appreciated in a new age not sharing his values. He commits suicide when acting as a safari guide to a group of young people.

Bru, H. *The Old Man and His Sons,* 1970. Katil and his wife are in their 70s. They have reared 11 children, all but one of whom have their own households. The novel shows the conflict of the old, who want no luxury but only a roof over their heads and food enough to eat, and the material pleasures sought by their children. The setting is the Faroe Islands of the North Atlantic.

Buck, Pearl. *The Good Earth*, 1931. Traces of the life of Wan Lung, a Chinese peasant with a love of the sea, through his marriage, birth of sons, famine, rebuilding of his fortune, and at his death, hearing his sons talk of selling the land he loved so much so they can move to the city.

Burgess, William V. *Second-Hand Persons,* 1969. Reveals the personalities of several characters in a home for old men somewhere near London.

Cary, Joyce. *The Horse's Mouth,* 1950. Gulley Jimson, 67-year-old English artist, reveals his reflections, his ideas for pictures, his efforts to cadge a dinner or a piece of canvas, his interlude in jail for smashing windows, and his reunion with his old love – an engaging, if unprincipled Bohemian.

Chase, Mary Ellen. *The Plum Tree,* 1949. The plum tree stood on the lawn of the Home for Aged Women. It was in full bloom on the day when three of the old ladies, all over 80, were to be transferred to an insane asylum. It tells the story of the loving and understanding matron and nurse who had presided over the home for 30 years. What might have been a nightmare turned into a gala party.

Christie, Agatha. *At Bertram's Hotel,* 1965. Miss Jane Marple, lady detective of sorts, revisits a quiet London hotel which she remembered fondly from her youth. The book not only involves a mystery with little violence, but a good contrast between this era and that of Miss Marple's youth.

Clavel, Bernard. *The Fruits of Winter,* 1969. Explores the psychology of old age and the effect of war on people. Set in provincial France during the last year of World War II, the novel deals with an aging couple and the trouble in their family.

Corbett, Elizabeth. *The Young Mrs. Meigs*, 1931. Mrs. Meigs, at 80, doesn't care if she is half dead so long as one leg is under a bridge table. She is cheerfully independent and that, plus common sense, help her and her family avoid many stormy scenes.

Cowley, Joy. *Nest in a Falling Tree*, 1967. Set in New Zealand, the story tells of Maura Prince, who has nursed her blind, cardiac-troubled mother for the last 20 years. Maura has an affair with Red, an 18-year-old gardener, but this causes a crisis when her mother returns home from the hospital.

Detre, Jean. *A Happy Ending*, 1967. Seventy-year-old Mr. Rose, a rich, retired businessman, spends winters in Florida and the rest of the year with his sister-in-law in New York. Visits to his doctor and an interfering family make up his life until he meets Mrs. Sweet, who becomes his companion even to Europe and Africa.

Ekwensi, Cyprian. *Burning Grass*, 1966. An older respected man is afflicted by "the wandering sickness." He leaves his homestead to seek out his grown sons and, in the process, learns something of the reasons for his life. Reflects a West African view of death and the afterlife.

France, Anatole. *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, 1921. Sylvestre is a kind-hearted, absent-minded old archeologist. He kidnaps the orphaned daughter of his former love, but when her guardian is found to be an embezzler, she is made the legal ward of Bonnard. The author is a Nobel Prize winner.

Gibson, William. *A Mass for the Dead*, 1968. A successful writer re-creates his life with his parents to atone for failing to express his love when they were alive, to prepare for his own old age as a father and to pass to his children what he has learned.

Gilman, Dorothy. *The Amazing Mrs. Pollifax,* 1970. When the CIA needs someone to fly to Istanbul and contact a defecting Russian agent, they turn to Mrs. Emily Pollifax, a nice little old lady in a flowered hat. The trouble is that she soon finds herself not only embroiled with a gang of ruthless enemy agents, but on the wrong side of the Turkish police as well. But with a lot of gentle persuasion – and a karate chop or two – she again accomplishes her mission.

Greene, Graham. *Travels with My Aunt,* 1970. A 75-year-old aunt jaunts around the world kicking up her heels.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea*, 1952. An old fisherman overtaken by bad luck proves his tenacity and courage when he hooks a monster marlin. He kills the catch but is hauled out to sea and they bring back what the sharks have not touched.

Hilton, James. *Good-Bye Mr. Chips,* 1934. Mr. Chipping, known to three generations of schoolboys at Brookfield as Mr. Chips, recalls his life there, the jokes he had made which became classics, and the thousands he had known and regarded as his boys. Just as gently as he lived he fades smilingly out of life.

Kawabata, Yasunari. *The Sound of the Mountain,* 1970. A Nobel Prize winner's story of an old Japanese man who, while worrying over family pride, becomes aware of the aging of his mind and body.

Lawrence, Josephine. *The Web of Time*, 1953. The story of Munsey Willis, who has spent the last of his money on his daughter's wedding and is compelled to retire because of his age. The plot concerns his search for a job and self-respect.

Mann, Thomas. *Buddenbrooks*, 1924. A Nobel Prize winner's chronicle of four generations of the Buddenbrook family, from prosperity to extinction through over-refinement.

Paton, Alan. *Cry the Beloved Country,* 1948. An aged Zulu priest is forced from the security of his rural parish to attempt the rescue of his children from the pressures of modern urban life. The gap between the two generations is too great, and he is forced to watch them perish.

Saltykov-Shehedrin, M. *The Golovlovs,* 1961. A realistic and humorous 19th century Russian satire on a wretched family, including a cantankerous, but unfortunate mother.

Sherman, D.R. *Old Mali and the Boy,* 1964. A boy in India learns some lessons from an old man while on a hunting trip.

Spark, Muriel. *Momento Mori,* 1959. The reactions of a group of elderly people when they receive a message, "Remember you must die."

Tanizaki, Junichiro. *Diary of a Mad Old Man,* 1965. A 70-year-old Japanese man writes in detail of his failing health, what the doctors are doing about it, his family, and especially his daughter-in-law, who plays upon him to win special favors.

Trollope, Anthony. *The Warden*, 1929. An old Englishman during the 19th century runs a home for old men and attempts to retain his integrity in trying circumstances.

Updike, John. *The Poorhouse Fair,* 1959. This concerns the lives of a handful of marvelously eccentric and understanding people in a poorhouse for the old on the plains of central New Jersey.

Zola, Emile. *Earth*, 1955. French peasant life and the greed for land causes hatred between sisters, neglect of parents, and ends in the murder of a woman by her sister. There is much vulgarity in the story, making the characters seem lower than the animals around them.

Dramas

Aiken, George. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in *Best Plays of the Early American Theater*, John Gassner (ed.), 1967. The story of slavery and freedom, South and North, as seen through the poignant experiences of an old, religious slave, Uncle Tom, and his associates, black and white.

Albee, Edward. *The American Dream,* 1961. A critical look at Mommy's and Daddy's attitudes toward Grandma.

Albee, Edward. *The Sandbox*, 1960. A shorter and earlier variation of *The American Dream.*

Alvarez Quintero, Serafim and Joaquin. "A Sunny Morning," in *Thirty Famous One-Act Plays*, Bennet Cerf and Van Cartmell (eds.), 1943. A charming piece set in Madrid where an old man and woman who were once lovers meet after years of separation.

Anderson, Robert. *I Never Sang for My Father,* 1968. A remorseful, intellectual son has nagging memories of missed chances to repair the alienation from his clever, cantankerous old father. Also deals with the theme of what is to become of dad now that mom is dead and he is alone.

Anouilh, Jean. *The Waltz of the Toreadors*, 1957. A retired French general reminisces about missed opportunities and keeps his eye out for new ones while his wife looks on in dismay. (Humorous)

Arden, John. "The Happy Haven," in *Three Plays*, 1966. Life in a hospital for the old.

Bagnold, Enid. "The Chinese Prime Minister," in *Four Plays*, 1971. Deals with the problems of a 70-year-old actress who decides to go off and marry a Chinese prime minister.

Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame*, 1958. A one-act play that furnishes food for thought about old age, helplessness and dying.

Beckett, Samuel. *Krapp's Last Tape,* 1960. A one-act play in which 69-year-old Krapp listens to his former self on tape and reflects upon time and life. (Pessimistic, as is most of Beckett's work.)

Chekhov, Anton. "Uncle Vanya," in *Four Great Plays,* 1958. Uncle Vanya feels that he is aging quickly in the Russian countryside while real life is passing him by. The marriage of a retired professor to a much-younger wife also leads us to reflect on the role of age.

Congreve, William. *The Way of the World.* Available in various collections. A comedy in which a lovesick old woman is made to look like a fool. Typical of late 18th century English dramatists' views of the old.

Coward, Noel. *Waiting in the Wings,* 1960. Retired actresses in an old-age home.

Elder III, Lonne. *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*, 1965. A widower in Harlem attempts to cope with aging and his adult children, one of whom tires of supporting him.

Goldman, James. *The Lion in Winter,* 1966. An aging but energetic king and queen struggle zestfully with each other and their grown children, one of whom is Richard the Lionheart.

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun,* 1961. Trials of Lena Younger (Mama), a struggling black woman in her early 60s, in reconciling her deep-seated dreams of spiritual emancipation with the more sophisticated dreams of the other members of the family on the occasion of her receipt of a legacy.

Ibsen, Henrik. *John Gabriel Borkman.* Available in various collections. Borkman, distinguished, aging, has been rejected by his son and society, but hopes for new recognition. The rejection of his talents "killed" him long before his physical death.

Ibsen, Henrik. *The Master Builder.* Available in various collections. An aging architect fears youthful competition, but allies with a young woman in a desperate effort to prove he is still vigorous.

Ionesco, Eugene. "The Chairs" in *Four Plays,* 1958. A bored, almost senile old man wants to give the world an important message. He and his wife set up chairs, which are filled with invisible people. A deaf-mute tries to deliver the message but fails.

Kaufman, George, and Hart, Moss. *You Can't Take It With You,* 1937. The joyful, though often overwhelming adventures of Martin Vanderhof, known as Grandpa, a wiry little man of 75, who leads his family through the complexities of American business civilization, carrying the banner of doing "what one likes" rather than "what one must."

Lee, Wayne. "Deadwood" in *The Golden Book of Church Plays,* Lawrence Brings (ed.), 1955. Two women consider an old grandmother "deadwood," but the reader knows better.

McEnroe, Robert. "The Silver Whistle" in *The Burns Mantle Best Plays of 1948-49,* John Chapman (ed.), 1949. The tale of a modern Cyrano in an old people's home, to which his lies and fantasies bring new life.

Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman,* 1949. The pathetic story of Willy Loman, 63, who, after 35 years in the business of selling, is forced to confront his failure as a salesman and human being and all the terrible implications of failure.

Miller, Arthur. *The Price,* 1968. A policeman and his wife ponder the question of his retirement, and he and his brother dispute who was right and who was wrong in sacrificing to support their father almost 30 years before. An energetic 89-year-old man is another major and fascinating character.

Moliere, Jean. *The Miser.* Available in various collections. Harpagon, a rich and suspicious old man, scolds his children for being spendthrifts, but decides to marry a poor young wife. He never learns that human love is worth more than money. Comic but unflattering picture of old age.

Mowatt, Anna Cora. "Fashion" in *Best Plays of the Early American Theatre,* John Gassner (ed.), 1967. Conflict between two dynamic Americans – Adam Trueman, 72, robust, rich farmer of Catteraugus county, proud to be a plain man; and Mrs. Elizabeth Tiffany, a lady of New York City, who imagines herself fashionable.

Williams, Tennessee. "The Last of My Solid Gold Watches" in *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One-Act Plays,* 1953. An old salesman talks of his friends who are dying and laments the fact that people and life no longer have the quality they did in the old days.

Williams, Tennessee. "Sweet Bird of Youth" in *Three Plays,* 1964. A sensational accumulation of degeneracy and decay is depicted by an over-sexed actress who resists aging, a bigoted father, a diseased girl and a gigolo seducer.

Zindel, Paul. *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds,* 1971. Although this play is primarily concerned with a woman and her two teenage daughters, it also deals in a minor but powerful way with attitudes toward a very old woman.

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EPILOGUE
Why Teach About Aging?

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Children learn about aging whether we teach them or not. The issue is not whether they learn, but rather what they learn about the lifelong process of growing up and growing older. If left to happenstance, children learn about aging in the same ways they learn about so many things – simply by absorbing whatever they hear or see, often without being able to distinguish between fact and fiction. We might call this learning by osmosis. All too often, what children learn about aging by osmosis is based on myths about the aging process and on stereotypes of older people that are deeply entrenched in our culture. These myths and stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to another in our language, humor and literature, and through all the media by which we perpetuate the knowledge, values and attitudes of our society.

Not everything that children learn about aging is negative. As with adults from whom they learn, children's attitudes about aging are complex and ambivalent, reflecting the mixed feelings of society as a whole. Yet research shows that, even at a very early age, children may already have internalized ideas that can serve as a breeding ground for ageism (age prejudice) and gerontophobia (fear of aging).

Similarly, not everything children learn about the process of aging is false. Yet, again, research demonstrates that what children know about the process of growing up and growing older is a mixture of truth and misinformation. Like many adults from whom they learn, their perspective on life in the later years (and of their own future as people who will someday grow old) is often dominated by a view of aging as a process of decline, rather than one of growth and fulfillment. A child's view of what it means to grow old frequently emphasizes physical and mental handicaps, loneliness and isolation, institutionalization and dependency. What is missing is the vision of life at all ages as characterized by wellness of body and mind, involvement with others, and independent lives connected to the community at large. In other words, children fully understand the problems that often accompany old age. What they do not understand is the great potential for happiness and wellness throughout long life when people exercise good habits of mental and physical health, and when they live in a society that provides opportunities for them in later years to remain active participants in the mainstream of life.

Children today are expected to live longer than any previous generation and, barring unforeseen circumstances, to live out their long lives in a progressively aging society. Since the beginning of the century, average life expectancy at birth has steadily climbed from 47 to 74 years, which means that half the children born in the 1980s should live to their mid-70s, even if no new breakthroughs in medical technology and health care develop to extend their lives further.

When today's elementary school children become tomorrow's senior citizens, they will be among those one out of four Americans who already have passed their 60th birthday. This "longevity revolution" of the 20th century brings vast implications for all aspects of life. Greater longevity and changes in the age composition of the population have had, and will continue to have, an enormous impact on the family, careers and retirement, education, medicine, business, government and the distribution of public resources. All living Americans, and especially the young, will live out the rest of their lives facing new challenges on age-related issues that

will require intelligent decisions based on knowledge and comprehension, not on myth and misinformation.

For all these reasons, children need to learn about aging. It is better to prevent than to cure, easier to learn than "un-learn." Children should begin at the earliest possible age to develop a healthy and realistic view of aging, to understand that they can maximize their own opportunities for quality of life, and to develop understanding of the complex issues of living in an aging world. None of us, and least of all young people, can afford to face our individual or collective future(s) guided by ageist myths and stereotypes or by patterns of age discrimination and gerontophobic behavior. If preparation for the future was ever a goal of education, then education about aging should clearly be a high priority for all who play a role in educating and socializing the young.

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